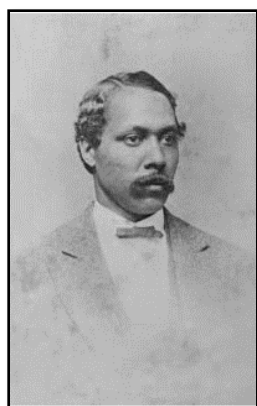


February Celebrates African-American History Month

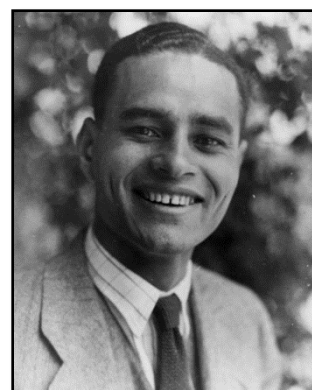
Celebrating notable figures who have substantively contributed to Department of State history.

By Rachel Alberstadt



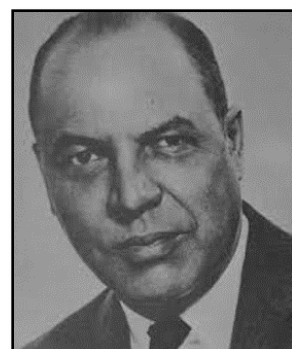
❖ **Ebenezer Don Carlos Bassett** served as the first African American diplomat. He was appointed in 1869 by Ulysses S. Grant to serve in Haiti. Mr. Bassett spent his laudable career campaigning for international human rights. His skilled negotiation skills impacted American foreign policy and positively impacted U.S.-Haitian relations during difficult crises.

❖ **Ralph J. Bunche** was the first African American recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, which was awarded for his role in negotiating peace talks between Israel and Arab neighbouring States. He was also the first African American to receive a doctorate in Political Science from Harvard University. One of the 20th centuries greatest diplomats (he authored 2 chapters of the UN Charter), Mr. Bunche also spent his life championing civil rights. The DOS library in DC is named in his honour.



❖ **Ambassador Aurelia Erskine Brazeal** has served as a career foreign service officer from 1968 to 2008. She has served as Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia (1990), Kenya (1993), and Ethiopia (2002-2005). She also was the first African-American to serve as economic counselor to Japan.

❖ **Edward R. Dudley** was the first African American appointed Governor of a U.S. territory (U.S. Virgin Islands, 1946-1948). He later became the first African American Ambassador under appointment by President Harry S. Truman to Liberia (1949-1953). He later served as Chief Justice on the New York Supreme Court (1965-1985).





❖ **Ambassador Patricia Roberts Harris** was the first African American woman to become dean of a law school (Howard University), first African American woman to serve in a presidential cabinet (Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Secretary of Health and Human Services), and later became the first African American woman to become an Ambassador, (Luxembourg, 1965-1967).

❖ **Ambassador Clinton E. Knox** was an Army veteran who joined the Department as an FSO after WWII. He served as a career diplomat for 28 years and became the first African American Secretary to the U.S. Mission to NATO. He also served as Ambassador to (West African Republic of Dahomey now Benin, 1964-1969) and Haiti.



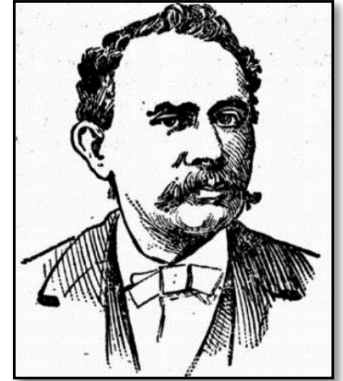
❖ **Ambassador John Howard Morrow Sr** was a career diplomat who served as the first Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea (1959-1961). He also served as an alternate delegate the UN, a permanent U.S. representative to UNESCSO (rank of minister, 1961-1963), and Chairman of the foreign service officer studies at the School of Foreign Affairs (now FSI, 1963-1964).

❖ **Ambassador June Carter Perry** served as Ambassador to Lesotho. She served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the American Embassies in Madagascar and the Central African Republic. She established the first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the U.S. and the Southern African Development Community. She was Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of State, directed numerous DOS bureaus, and acted as senior advisor to the Africa Bureau for her SME.



❖ **Secretary Colin L. Powell** (Served as the 65th Secretary of State under President George W. Bush). Secretary Powell was the first African American appointed to that position. He also served as a General in the U.S. Army, National Security Advisor (1987-1989), and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (1989-1993).

- ❖ **Ambassador William Frank Powell** became the first American Ambassador to Haiti, appointed by President McKinley (1897-1905).



- ❖ **Secretary Condoleezza Rice** was the first woman to serve as National Security Advisor, appointed in 2000. In 2004 George W. Bush appointed her as Secretary of State and she became the first African American woman to serve in this position.

- ❖ **Ambassador Carl T. Rowan** became the first African American to hold the position of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State under President John F. Kennedy (1961-1963). He later served as Ambassador to Finland (1963-1964) and as Director of the U.S. Information Agency under President L. B. Johnson. He became the first African American to sit on the National Security Council. In 1995 he won a Pulitzer Prize in journalism for his commentaries on the Nixon political scandals.



- ❖ **Ambassador Clifton R. Wharton** was the first African American to join the Foreign Service. President Dwight Eisenhower appointed him as the first African American chief of a diplomatic mission to a European country (Romania 1958-1961). In 1961, President John F. Kennedy appointed him Ambassador to Norway (1961-1964). He became the first career FSO to become an ambassador.

Learn more here:

- ✓ http://diplopedia.state.gov/index.php/African-American_Diplomats
- ✓ [Ralph J. Bunche Library](#)
- ✓ <https://history.state.gov/about/faq/african-americans-in-the-foreign-service>
- ✓ <https://statemag.state.gov/2019/03/ebenezer-bassett/>